

In closing tonight, I thought about turning serious and talking about all we've been through since I was here last year. But then I decided this wasn't the time or the place. You came to have a good time; we've got Drew Carey waiting to entertain us.

So instead, I'm going to leave you with one last thought and one last photo of our dog Spot.

[*Slide change.*]

I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, is this a great country or what? [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Holland, outgoing president, White House Correspondents' Association, who introduced the President. He also referred to ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

## Remarks at Opening Day of 2002 White House Tee-Ball May 5, 2002

Well, Shalim, thank you very much for singing the national anthem. Welcome to baseball at the White House. We're glad you all are here.

I want to thank the commissioner of tee-ball at the White House this year, one of the alltime great baseball players, one of the alltime great men, Mr. Cal Ripken.

I want to—I want to welcome the teams that are going to play today on the opening day of the 2002 season. The Uniondale Little League Sluggers and all their moms and dads and the coaches—thank you all very much. And as well, we want to thank the 6 and 11 Little League Sluggers from Trenton, New Jersey. And I want to thank your moms and dads for coming too. Welcome.

We've also got some really fine former baseball players with us—Tony Perez, Mr. Hall of Fame. As well, we've got “Cha Cha” Orlando Cepeda.

I want to thank the other coach on the field, a member of my Cabinet, *Senor* Mel Martinez.

Erubiel Durazo, from the world champion Arizona Diamondbacks, is with us today as well. Erubiel, *mucho gusto*.

As well, there's a great new movie out called “The Rookie.” He is—this guy's a Texan. He's a great story. I hope you go see the movie. But the man who Dennis

Quaid plays in the movie is with us today, the actual baseball player, Jim Morris. Thank you for coming, Jim.

As well, a former Texas Ranger, Billy Ripken—where are you, Billy? Hi, Billy.

I do want to thank our announcers, Ron Eisen and Alvaro Martin, for being here with us. Thank you guys very much for coming.

This guy doesn't play baseball, but he is a Washington Redskins star, “Big Daddy” Wilkinson. Thank you for coming. Welcome.

And now, before we begin, I'd like for the players to join me in reciting the Little League pledge. Are you ready?

“I trust in God. I love my country and will respect its laws. I will play fair and strive to win. But win or lose, I will always do my best.”

Are you ready?

And now, it is my honor to put the first ball on the tee to kick off tee-ball at the White House.

[*The President placed the ball on the tee.*]

Play ball!

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:27 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Shalim; ESPN announcers Rich Eisen and Alvaro

Martin; and Dan “Big Daddy” Wilkinson, defensive tackle, Washington Redskins.

## Exchange With Reporters in Southfield, Michigan May 6, 2002

### *Upcoming Meeting With Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel*

Q. [*Inaudible*—that he absolutely has to talk to Yasser Arafat in order to get to peace negotiations?

*The President.* You know, I’m going to have a private conversation with Ariel Sharon and would rather that my conversation—what I’m going to tell him and discuss with him be done, and he be the first to know about it—

Q. Has he talked with you about the documents he has?

*The President.* I talk to him all the time. But if you’re asking about Chairman Arafat, I have been asked—if I have been asked once, I’ve been asked 20 times about him. He has disappointed me. He must lead. He must show the world that he believes in peace. And we have laid out conditions for all parties in order to achieve peace. All parties—Arab nations, Israel, Chairman Arafat, and the Palestinian party—must assume their responsibilities and lead.

This is a series of discussions we’re having with—not only with Prime Minister Sharon; as you know, King Abdullah is coming as well. It follows up on meetings I’ve had with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia as well as the King of Morocco. I will continue to have further meetings as we begin to bring—coalesce the world around a vision for peace.

Q. But are the Israelis making it any more difficult by seeming to say that Arafat is not someone they can deal with at all?

*The President.* Oh, I think they express disappointment in his ability to lead. I mean, after all, right before we had our security agreement done, a shipload of am-

munition shows up and could probably be aimed at the Israeli citizens. So there’s a high level of disappointment.

But I haven’t had a chance to talk with Prime Minister Sharon in recent days. I look forward to hearing what he has to say. Part of the goal of the United States is to lay out a vision for peace, which I have done, and then encourage people to assume their responsibility necessary to achieve the peace. And that’s why it’s so important, for example, that the Arab world be very much involved in a peace process, in discussions for—toward peace. And we are—I think we’re making some progress, and I appreciate that.

### *Burma’s Release of Aung San Suu Kyi*

Q. Mr. President, what’s your reaction to Myanmar’s release of Aung San Suu Kyi?

*The President.* Oh, I thought that was very positive, a good development.

### *Education*

Q. Mr. President, this week you’re talking about domestic issues. Are you afraid that people are losing their attention to those during the war?

*The President.* No, Mike [Mike Allen, Washington Post], I think that people around America know how important public education is, particularly moms and dads and principals and teachers. Public education is on the minds of our citizens every day, because our citizens see public schools in their neighborhoods, and our citizens know how important public education is for the future.

So I will spend as much time as necessary to herald success in our public